ELECTRONIC RECORDS ARCHIVES

FEATURE LIST
(FL)

for the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

ELECTRONIC RECORDS ARCHIVES
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE
(NARA ERA PMO)

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Electronic Records Archives (ERA) Feature List

This document contains a list of functional features that were identified by users. Following each feature is a short description of the intention of that feature. This list should not be considered definitive nor complete, but is intended to provide a general overview of the capabilities of the system. This list will change over time, and full system requirements will be developed for the Request for Proposal.

ERA will:

I.   **Accommodate electronic records, regardless of type, format, or media.**
One of the central requirements of the system, as stated in the ERA Vision Statement, is to have the capability to take in, store, and output all types of electronic records. Although it is the intention of NARA to promulgate certain standards for the creation and receipt of the major record types, it is vital that the system has the flexibility to deal with records that do not conform to these standards.

II.   **Accommodate unscheduled, permanent, and temporary electronic records.**
The system must have the capability to take physical custody of all types of records, regardless of their current legal custody.

III.   **Support the collection, integration, and sharing of information about records throughout all business functions.**
In addition to the records themselves, ERA must be capable of storing information about the records, and maintaining links between the records and this information. This information will include descriptive and contextual information, attributes of the records, and metadata about the records. Some of this information will come into the system along with the records, while additional information will be created and stored throughout the records life cycle.

IV.   **Implement functionality for templates providing the necessary information for the system to process each electronic record type.**
The use of templates, or formal models describing the essential characteristics of types of records, to aid in the persistent storage of records and access to them is central to the concept of ERA. The system must provide the capability for creation, management, and application of templates that describe the content, context, structure, and presentation of records. ERA will validate incoming records against these templates and use the templates to deliver authentic records to future access technology.

V.   **Provide functionality for managing relationships among records.**
Records are organized into various aggregations and hierarchical groups (files, series, or collections, etc.). Each individual record has relationships to other records through these groups. In addition, a record may have a relationship to records in other formats (for example, non-electronic records). The system must provide the capability to preserve a

record's original relationships, as well as for NARA staff to revise relationships and create new ones.

VI.   Support the workflow associated with the business processes supported by the system.
There are a variety of processes, authorizations, handoffs between processes, assignments of tasks to staff, etc., that underlie the core business functions supported by ERA. The system will assist in implementing these processes.

VII.   Store records reliably.
In this context, reliable storage of records entails the ability for the system to store records with their essential characteristics intact; in such a way that NARA can produce authentic copies of the records and provide information supporting the assertion of authenticity.

VIII. Store electronic records in a manner that allows for maximum possible independence from specific hardware and software infrastructures.
In order for records to be preserved in a manner that will ensure their continued availability into the future, it is essential that the method selected for preservation be independent of any particular proprietary hardware and software. The ERA system may be implemented using proprietary hardware and software, but the continued existence and accessibility of electronic records in ERA must be relatively immune to hardware and software obsolescence.

IX.   Receive, preserve, and store electronic records in a manner and environment appropriate to their sensitivity level.
The system will contain records or portions of records exempted from release under the Freedom of Information Act, Presidential Records Act, or other authorities. It is vital that the system has the capability to protect these records from inappropriate access throughout their life.

X.   Maintain an inventory of all of the electronic record holdings.
The system will contain up-to-date data on all records contained therein, their groupings, and the conditions of their availability.

XI.   Implement record schedules functionality.
Records schedules contain the instructions for the disposition of records. They specify how long a group of records must be maintained (retention period), whether it may be destroyed at the end of the retention period, or whether it must be transferred to NARA. The system will support creation, maintenance, and implementation of record schedules.

XII.   Support appraisal of electronic records by NARA staff.
Appraisal is a collaborative process between NARA and the agencies that produce records, the result of which is a determination of the disposition of records. The system will provide tools to assist NARA staff in the appraisal process.

XIII.   Support disposition of electronic records.
The disposition of records is the action taken on records no longer actively needed by the
agency that produced them.   Disposition instructions are contained in records schedules
or other disposition agreements and indicate whether a records creator should transfer
records to NARA or another entity for temporary storage, transfer records to NARA for
permanent storage, or destroy records.   The system will support the execution of the
disposition instructions, including physical transfer of records from their producers,
destruction of disposable records in NARA's holdings, and transfer of legal custody to
NARA.

**XIV.   Provide for the authorized destruction of electronic records from electronic records
holdings.**
Records contained in ERA may be destroyed based on disposition instructions, on a
reappraisal by NARA indicating that the records no longer have value, on receipt by the
system of a replacement for a record, or for other reasons.   The system will destroy
records only with proper NARA authorization.

XV.   Support transfer of sample records with attendant workflow support.
NARA sometimes requests a sample of a group of records (usually as part of the
appraisal process for records for which an agency wants to create a records schedule or
disposition agreement).   The system will have the capability to accept a transfer of such a
sample, but will not add the sample to the permanent contents of the system.

XVI.   Support transfer of electronic records to NARA with attendant workflow support.
Agencies will transfer, or physically transmit, records to NARA in a variety of formats.
The ERA system will be capable of receiving these transfers.   ERA will also support the
workflow (authorizations, receipts, and other actions) required to carry out the transfer
process.

XVII.   Provide the capability to verify contents of accessions of electronic records.
The system will provide the capability to verify that a transfer of records contains what it
was supposed to contain. This may include comparing the records received against
information identifying and characterizing those records in the applicable disposition
agreement or schedule; ensuring compliance with NARA regulations, standards and
norms for accessions; and validating the attributes and contents of transferred materials
against specified record templates.

XVIII. Provide for accessioning of electronic records.
Accessioning is the process of NARA taking legal custody of records; that is, accepting
responsibility for decisions related to preservation and access to the records (as opposed
to simple physical transfer, where NARA takes physical custody, but authority over the
records remains with their creator). Accessioning involves completing the required
actions to allow for conveying custody.

XIX. Support arrangement of electronic records.

Arrangement of electronic records pertains to the arrangement of the records into files, series, etc. NARA preserves arrangements imposed on records by their creators. The system will have to be able to materialize the original arrangement of the records. This may involve both specifying and imposing an arrangement on records that were received out of order.

XX. Provide functionality for descriptions (including technical information) of electronic records.

The system will contain descriptions of records. Basic descriptions will usually be provided by the agency that created the records, and will be transferred with the records. The system will also provide the capability for archivists to verify, edit, or add to the descriptions, as well as create descriptions for records transferred without any descriptions. ERA will provide the capability for description of records at multiple levels of aggregation (series or collections, files, individual records).

XXI. Provide for review of electronic records for potentially sensitive information by authorized personnel.

ERA will receive records containing information exempted from release by the Freedom of Information Act, Presidential Records Act, and other authorities. NARA requires the agency that created the records to identify any restrictions on access at the time of transfer. The Freedom of Information Act requires the Government to release any reasonably segregable portion of a record that contains information exempted from release, as well as to indicate where, how much, and for what reason any information is withheld. Therefore, the system will provide tools to support the identification of records that might contain information exempted from release, the review of such records by government staff, and the production of redacted versions of those records in conformance with FOIA requirements.

XXII. Manage requests for access review.

When a user is denied access to records, or information in records that is legally exempt from requirements for release, the user can request that NARA perform an access review to confirm that the record does in fact contain restricted information. The system must enable the user to request access reviews, and allow NARA to respond to such requests.

XXIII. Implement the results of electronic records reviews.

The results of a review can be one of three things: release the record, withhold the record, or redact the record and release the redacted version. If the result is to release the record, the system will make the record available for access. If the result is to withhold the record, the system will prevent user access to the record. The system must enable NARA staff to grant or deny access to a record based on specified user access rights. For example, personal information released would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy would be withheld from the public, but the person who is the subject of the information would have a right of access to it. If the result of a review is to redact the record, the system must make the redacted copy available to authorized users.

XXIV. Provide for redaction of electronic records.

Redaction is the process by which information exempt from access is removed from within a record to allow other information in the record to be accessed. The system will provide tools to allow NARA and other authorized users to redact information in a variety of types of records (text, audio, video, photographic, etc.), and to indicate where and how much information was removed, as well as the legal basis for the redaction.

XXV. Provide access to the system from within NARA facilities and other locations.

Records, and functionality for searching and retrieving records, will be available via the Internet and, for authorized NARA users, via NARA's intranet. The system will need to meet legal requirements for accessibility and enforce access rights and restrictions.

XXVI. Provide for registration of system users.

The system will provide open (anonymous) access to information about records in NARA's holdings and access to records that are completely open to the public. However, the system must support NARA requirements for registration of users for access to records and/or functions that require special access rights and for access to services which require payment. The registration process will gather information from the user that will allow the system to create an account with appropriate access rights based on the users security clearance, affiliation with agencies that provide records to NARA, etc.

XXVII. Provide functionality for management of users and user access rights.

The system will contain the administrative capabilities for the creation of user accounts and management of access rights to various records and system functions for different categories of users.

XXVIII. Provide user interfaces with the appropriate functionality to support NARA users job functions.

Default user interfaces tailored to the various NARA functions will be included with the system. Users will have the capability to customize these interfaces to suit their own needs and preferences.

XXIX. Provide a variety of user interfaces appropriate to the skill level and research interests of originating entity users.

Default user interfaces tailored to the various functions required by agencies that provide records to NARA will be included with the system. Within parameters established by NARA, originating entity users will have the capability to customize these interfaces to suit their own needs and preferences.

XXX. Provide a variety of user interfaces appropriate to the skill level and research interests of non-NARA users.

Default user interfaces tailored to the various functions required by agencies that provide records to NARA will be included with the system. Within parameters established by NARA, non-NARA users will have the capability to customize these interfaces to suit their own needs and preferences.

XXXI. Provide search capability on electronic record descriptions and electronic record contents.

Currently, records at NARA are cataloged and accessed via descriptions of the records – usually at an aggregate level (series or collections). The ERA system will support the additional capability to search the content of the records themselves and will provide interfaces to enable users to move from searches of the descriptions of records to searches of the records themselves.

XXXII. Provide for mediated search capabilities (searches performed by NARA staff at the request of users).

The system will allow NARA staff to act as proxies for users, performing searches for users who request such assistance. The system must enable NARA staff either to perform such searches using 'proxy' access rights, identical to those of the requester (rather than the staff member's own access privileges) or to filter the results of such a search so that the requester only receives outputs that are allowed under the requester's access rights.

XXXIII. Be capable of accurate reproduction and output of electronic records.

The system must be able to output copies of preserved records. The system shall provide the user with a variety of options for output, as appropriate, including online presentation, file transfer, copies on physical media, and formatting options.

XXXIV. Provide certified copies of electronic records in a variety of formats and media.

ERA must be capable of delivering to customer's copies of electronic records that NARA certifies as true and complete copies.

XXXV. Provide fee-for-service capability.

NARA will charge fees for certain products and services. The system must provide the needed functionality to support both calculation and payment of fees for products and services.

XXXVI. Provide tutorials, training, help screens, and other state-of-the-art user assistance functionality.

XXXVII. Provide instructions for various business functions supported by the system.

XXXVIII. Provide the capability for NARA users to respond to user comments and requests.

There must be the ability for NARA staff users to have a dialog with other users, such as in response to a request for access to records, for mediation or assistance with a search, or a need to coordinate with agencies on various business transactions (schedules, transfers, retrievals, etc.).

XXXIX. Provide functionality for notifications and communication to system users.

The system must have the capability to "push out" messages to users (i.e., "The system is going down in 10 minutes.")

XL.   Interface with other systems as needed.
The system may need to interface with existing NARA systems, and must be compatible with existing NARA desktop applications.

XLI.   Maintain a complete audit trail of system activities with attribution, reporting capability, and retention of documentation of the activity.
The system must produce and maintain a complete, comprehensive audit trail of the preservation of all records in the system, including records which remain under the legal control of the creating agencies. The audit trail should record all processes performed in the system. It will also record information about access to records to support security and management of access privileges.

XLII. Provide metrics that measure performance and facilitate planning for NARA operations.

XLIII. Provide reporting capability.
Standard ("canned") reports, as well as ad hoc reporting capability, will be needed.

XLIV. Be scalable and extensible to accommodate substantial growth in the volume and variety of electronic records holdings.
The system design must accommodate considerable growth in both the volume and variety of electronic records the system will receive as electronic formats replace hardcopy formats in record keeping throughout the government. The design must accommodate this growth in volume and diversity without the need for major redesign.

XLV.   Protect the system and the electronic records holdings with state-of-the-art security and intrusion detection functionality.

XLVI. Provide state-of-the-art disaster recovery capability.
Various records must be accessible within specified timeframes based on their relative legal, national security, vital operational need, or evidentiary importance.   The system disaster recovery capabilities must enable it to comply with these timeframes.

XLVII.   Provide state-of-the-art systems administration capabilities.

XLVIII.   Support high availability.
The system supports a variety of functionality. The availability requirements will be determined on a function-by-function basis.

XLIX. Operate in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies.